



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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ARIVACA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO TRAFFICKING 3913 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA WHILE ARMED WITH A SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN.

TUCSON, Ariz. – Eddie Lee Hodges, 40, of Arivaca, Arizona, pleaded guilty in federal district court in Tucson to Possessing with the Intent to Distribute 3,913 pounds of marijuana and Possession of a sawed-off shotgun to protect the marijuana while it was being distributed.

Hodges had been charged with Possession with the Intent to Distribute 1,000 Kilograms or more of Marijuana and Possession of a Firearm During and In Relation to and in furtherance of a Drug Trafficking offense. On February 6, 2006, Immigration Customs Enforcement Special Agents assisted by United States Border Patrol Agents received information that a large amount of marijuana was being stored in a trailer off of Ruby Road in Arivaca, Arizona. Agents approached the trailer and saw a suspect flee on foot. The suspect was apprehended and identified as Eddie Lee Hodges. A strong smell of marijuana was detected emanating around the trailer and carport. Some 177 bundles of marijuana were seized weighing approximately 3913 pounds. A loaded Marlin 10 gauge bolt action sawed-off shotgun was discovered with the marijuana. Hodges told agents that the sawed-off shotgun was his and that he was guarding the marijuana until arrangements could be made to transport the marijuana to Tucson.

A conviction for Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years, a \$4,000,000.00 fine or both. This conviction carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years in prison. A conviction for Possession of a Sawed-Off Shotgun During and in relation to a drug trafficking crime carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both. This conviction carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years which must run consecutive to the underlying drug trafficking charge. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Jorgenson will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson on October 20, 2006.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (B.E.S.T.) led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in partnership with and assisted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and the United States Border Patrol. The prosecution is being handled by David P. Petermann, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR06-0506-TUC-CKJ JCG
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